

Duxbury Free Library

House for Sale

(Yankee likes to mosey around and see, out of editorial curiosity, what you can turn up when you go home hunting. We have no stake in the sale whatsoever and would decline it if offered.)

REFERENCE
NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM THE ROOM

"THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE"

It's a famous old landmark on the 84-acre island where the Pilgrims held their first Sunday worship service in America

ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1620, a small band of Pilgrims set forth from the *Mayflower*, then anchored at Provincetown, Cape Cod, in a sturdy 30-foot sailboat called a shallop. Their purpose was to explore around and find a good place to settle. After a few hours of sailing and brief encounter on shore with some unfriendly Indians near what is now the town of Eastham, a storm with severe winds arose, snapping the shallop's mast. Switching to the oars, the Pilgrims began to row towards what looked like a pretty safe harbor in the distance (Plymouth) but the seas became so rough they turned right into what's now Duxbury Bay and the lee of a small island. There they landed, built a fire, and spent the night. And since John Clark, the First Mate of the *Mayflower*, was the leader of this little band of Pilgrims, they named it "Clark's Island," which it has been ever since.

The next day they explored around Clark's Island, then spent a second night, and on Sunday, December 20, held a worship service, their first in the New World. Legend has it that the exact location of the service was on a huge flat boulder high on a hill in the center of the island. On that rock today (owned by the U.S. Government) are inscribed the words, "On the Sabbath Day wee Rested 20 December 1620."

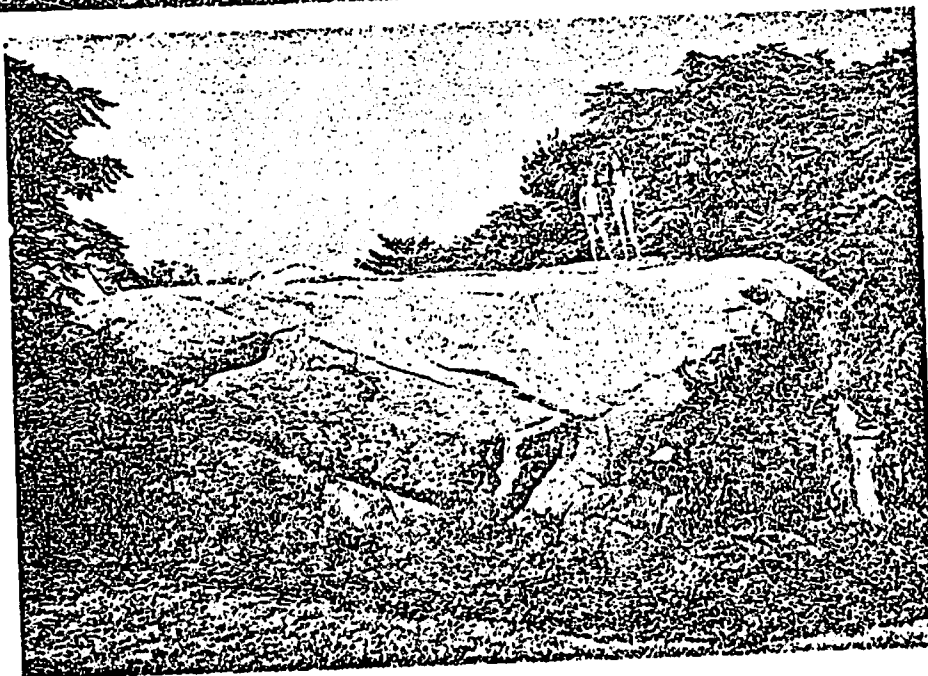
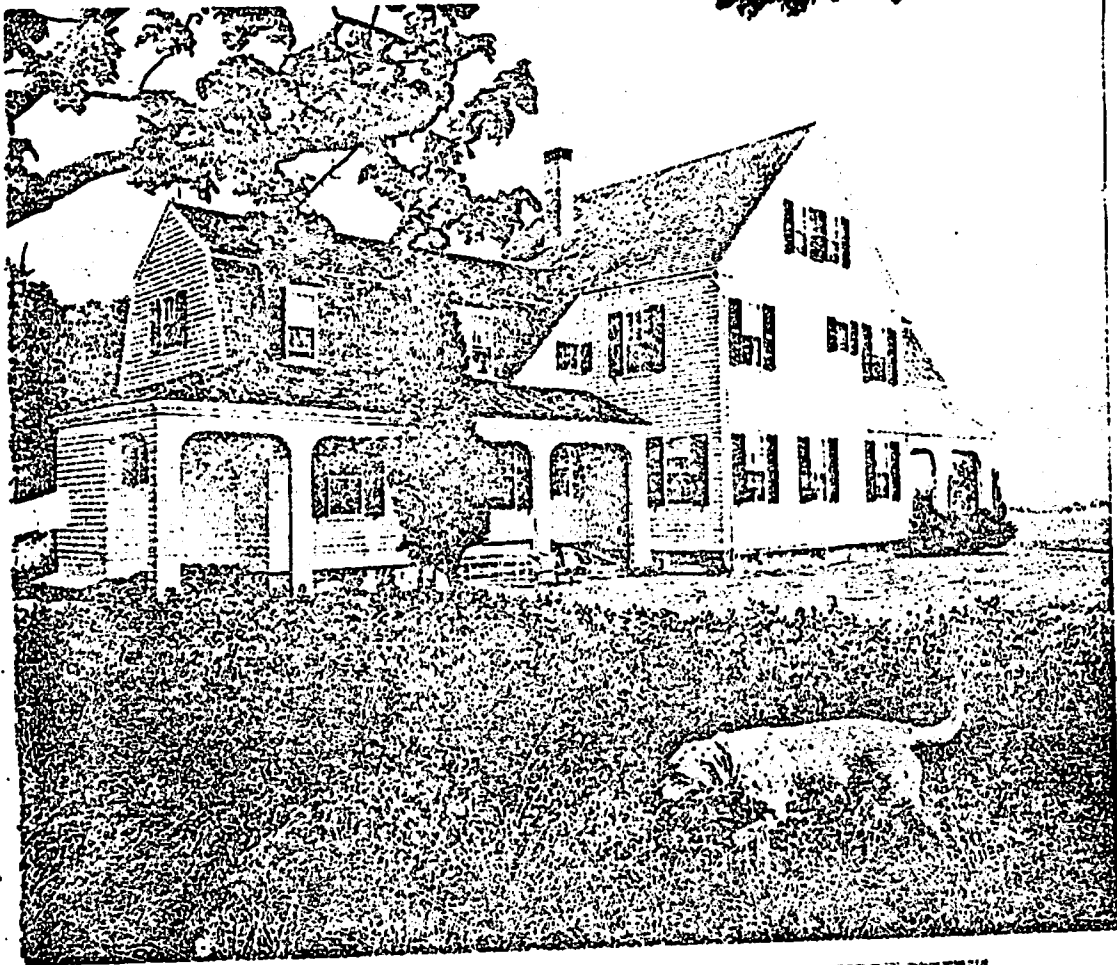
On December 21, known now in Plymouth, Massachusetts, as Forefathers

Day, they set out for Plymouth, landed, found it to their liking, sailed back to the *Mayflower* with the good news, and then returned with the big ship which dropped anchor in Plymouth Harbor on Saturday, December 26, 1620. You know the rest....

For a number of years the Pilgrims used Clark's Island for a pesthouse and jail, but then in 1690 one Elkanah Watson bought the island and erected a house. It still stands. Amazingly enough, Elkanah Watson's descendants retain ownership today of nearly half the island and all but five of the presently existing 14 houses. Recently about a fifth of the land and "Cedarfield," built in 1712 and the island's second oldest house, were deeded to the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society.

All these old houses on Clark's Island are nice. Very nice. And they are owned by distinguished, successful people. But one stands out as truly special. It's the three-story, 12-room white Dutch Colonial on the crest of the small hill on the south end of the island. Everyone who cruises that area is familiar with it. It is, in fact, indicated on the official U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey charts as a bona fide landmark. It was built in 1885 for Professor William Watson Goodwin, then head of the Greek Department at Harvard. Later it was occupied for nearly a quarter of a century, beginning in 1920, by Professor Henry Norris Rus-

All the materials in "The Professor's House" — boards, timbers, bricks, the 84 windows and doors — were towed across Plymouth Harbor in 1883-85, loaded on barges behind sailing vessels. (The dog belongs to the current renters.) The huge boulder, known as Pulpit Rock, is at the center of Clark's Island and is reached from "The Professor's House" via a woodland path. It is the location of the Pilgrims' first Sabbath.





House for Sale (continued)

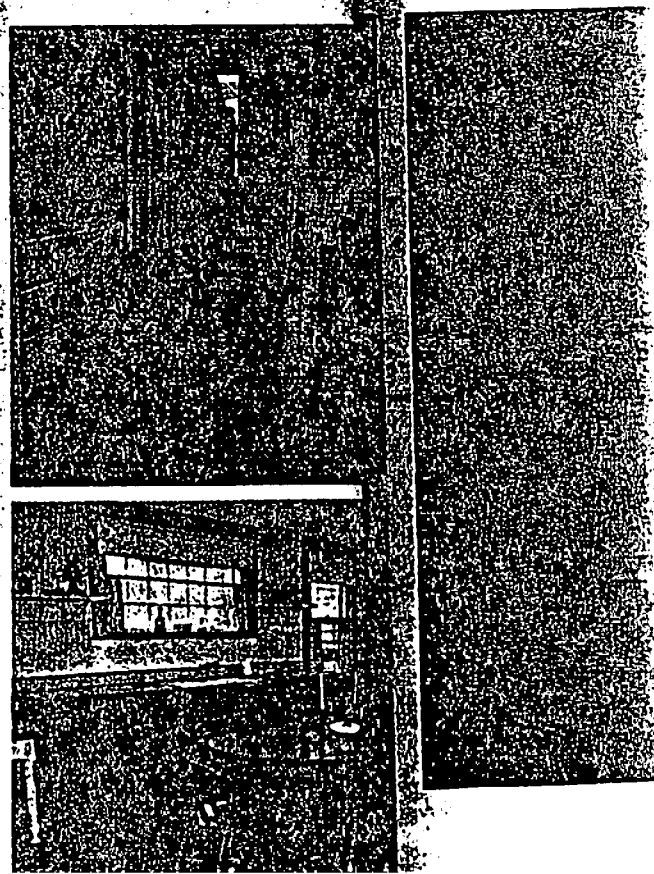
Above: Surrounded by water and magnificent views on three sides, "The Professor's House" has become a landmark to everyone who cruises the South Shore.

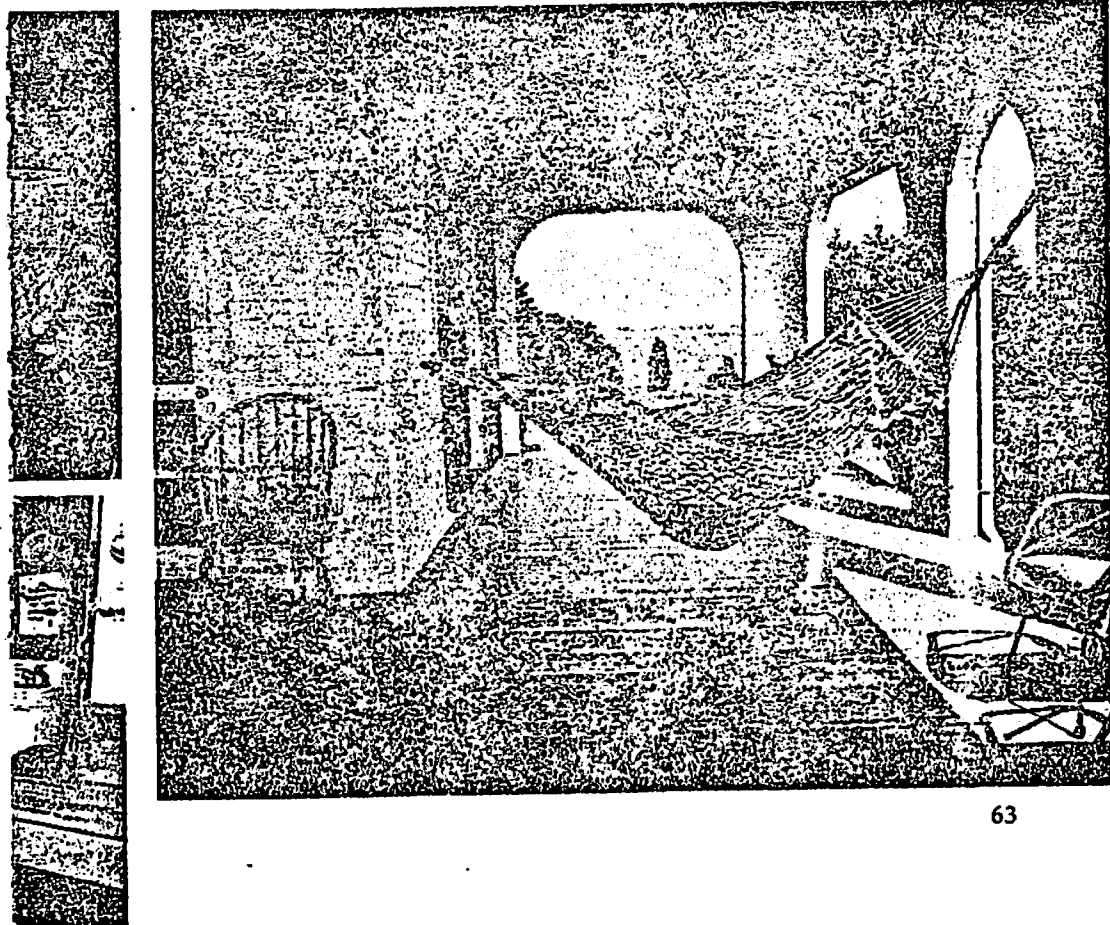
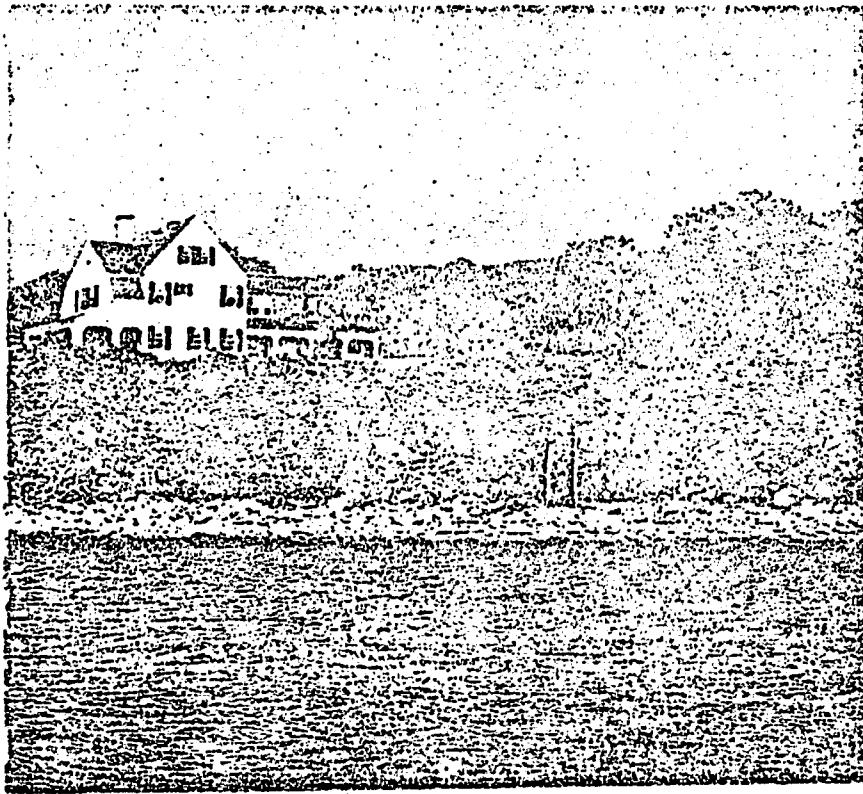
sell, a professor and head of the Astronomy Department at Princeton, and for many years president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The house is owned now by a member of the original Watson family, Howard C. Watson of 156 East 37th St., New York, NY 10016 (telephone 212-684-4146). He is asking \$200,000 . . . and that would include all the furniture (*very fine furniture, we might add*), linen, dishes, etc. — everything except some special personal possessions.

When Professor Goodwin built the house, he was not in need of minding his pennies. He retained VanBrunt and Howe, a distinguished Boston archi-

Right: Two interior views showing the library and kitchen. All the furniture, dishes, linen, etc., go with the house.

Far right: Looking east along part of the front veranda where French doors lead onto the living room and library.





House for Sale (continued)

tectural firm responsible for Memorial Hall and other buildings in Harvard Yard, as designers, and nothing was stinted. They created for Goodwin a summer house that was majestic without being pretentious, with the emphasis on airy, sun-filled rooms, high ceilings and verandas, i.e., the "perfect" summer house (for those who can afford it!). It has commanding views in *all* directions — old Plymouth to the south, the site of the Myles Standish house to the west, Duxbury Bay to the north, and Gurnet Point and Plymouth Lighthouse to the east.

There are seven bedrooms, two fireplaces (plus flues in many of the bedrooms), a library, living room, dining room, kitchen, family room, and two huge pantries. All are beautifully furnished and decorated. In the dining room, for instance, is the original wallpaper, blue with a thin silver line on white, providing a perfect setting for the hand-carved white corner cupboard with scallop design on top. The dining room chairs are Hepplewhite, and the two massive sideboards and dining table, with spare leaves to comfortably seat 20 for dinner, are all solid mahogany. In the bedrooms are half a dozen pine chests, love seats, coffee tables, assorted desks, etc., and beds (plus sheets and blankets) for each room, including a massive antique mahogany four-poster. Lots of nice outdoor furniture, too — including a 10-foot antique Windsor bench.

Beneath the house is a full cellar, with a small wine storage closet and a large work area. Near the water's edge are a furnished guest house and small but very inviting beach. The property consists of four acres, bounded by ocean on three sides and a wooded bird sanctuary on the fourth. While there are no roads (or automobiles!) on Clark's Island, there are a number of wide, woodland paths that lead to the various properties and to the Pilgrims' mighty boulder. Etched in our memory of the hot, muggy July day we were there this summer are beautiful views, refreshing breezes, wild blackberries everywhere, and the blessed quietness.

(continued)

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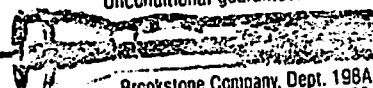
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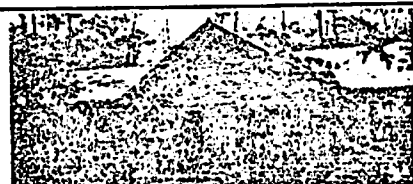


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House for Sale (continued)

Incidentally, there is no electricity on Clark's. And best of all, there are no telephones! Utilities include an automatic gas hot water heater, a small generator, a water pump, and large tanks for water supply, kerosene, oil, and gasoline. The modern conveniences like plumbing, etc., are all there — just powered a little differently.

Getting out to the island doesn't seem to be much of a problem. We found a young man in one of the Duxbury marinas who agreed to take us out in his Boston Whaler. (He traveled the approximately 1½ miles out to Clark's Island in a rather scary blink of an eye!) However, unless you have been specifically invited by Mr. Watson or one of the other island residents, we must warn you that you would be unwelcome. All the island land is privately owned to the water's edge at "mean low tide" so trespassing even on the shore is violating the law. We noticed a number of stern signs to this effect.

But then if you're the next owner of "The Professor's House," as Dr. Goodwin's dream summer house has been known for lo these many years, you, too, will want Clark's Island to remain exactly as it is. . . .

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